

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY**

RAMIREZ CANYON PARK  
5750 RAMIREZ CANYON ROAD  
MALIBU, CALIFORNIA 90265  
PHONE (310) 589-3200  
FAX (310) 589-3207



January 23, 2006

Susan Villain, Associate Planner  
City of Malibu  
Planning Division  
Attn: IS No. 05-005  
23815 Stuart Ranch Road  
Malibu, California 90265

**Comments on Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 05-004 and Coastal Development  
Permit Nos. 05-016 and 05-017 for two single family residences and associated  
structures at 22303 and 22307 Pacific Coast Highway, between Sweetwater  
Mesa Canyon and Carbon Canyon watersheds**

Dear Ms. Villain:

With respect to the proposed project, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) is primarily concerned with cumulative and growth-inducing impacts, as well as impacts to recreational resources (i.e., trails) and biological resources. The subject property is adjacent to (east of) land owned by Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, a joint powers authority, of which the Conservancy is a part. The Conservancy recommends that a new Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) be prepared for circulation with a clear project description, and that a conservation/trail easement be required over the northerly portion of the project site.

The project description in MND is flawed and unclear. The Notice references two separate Coastal Development Permit applications for the construction of two separate single-family homes on two separate lots at 22303 and 22307 Pacific Coast Highway (PCH). According to the Notice, these two sites, along with two other undeveloped lots, will be accessed via an existing unpaved road to be improved as a paved 20-foot wide driveway. The MND is deficient for not explaining whether this is in fact a subdivision (with a total of four lots), and where the four lots and proposed houses are located. The MND was also deficient for not including a site plan, which we received at a later date at our request. In addition, the acreages referenced for the Assessor's Parcel Numbers listed in the Notice, do not correspond to the acreages in the 2004 Assessor's Parcel map.

The initial study presumably does not address environmental impacts associated with the development of the two other undeveloped lots. This can be perceived as growth-inducing, as the improvements and construction to the road for two residences provide access to two

additional lots. This results in cumulative impacts associated with development on four lots, which are not addressed in the MND. The amount of fuel modification caused by four unclustered homes could approach 10 acres easily, and in an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area. By addressing the environmental impacts of the two residences at 22303 and 22307 PCH separately from the two other undeveloped lots, this appears to be piece-mealing. We understand that the different lots may be at different stages of review and approval by the City. Nevertheless, there is still the problem of piece-mealing of environmental impacts. A new MND should be prepared and circulated for public review analyzing impacts of the conceivable locations for the additional lots. At the very least, in the subject MND, or in a recirculated MND, appropriate mitigation measures should be required and implemented to reduce the degree of any foreseeable potential cumulative and growth-inducing impacts from development of all four lots.

### **Coastal Slope Trail**

The proposed Coastal Slope Trail is located just north of the project site, per discussions with National Park Service (NPS) staff. The project site appears to be located within roughly less than 400 feet south of a conceptual proposed Coastal Slope Trail (based on our 2004 Assessor's Parcel map and data). The NPS, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Conservancy are undertaking a joint agency effort to develop a Trails Management Plan for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, of which a draft was recently released for public comment. This plan includes conceptual and real alignments for the Coastal Slope Trail. These proposed locations are rough locations, and it is necessary to allow for some flexibility for changes to the alignment based on constraints. We recommend an approximately 800-foot buffer measured from the northern property boundary southward, to allow for modifications to the conceptual CST alignment and to minimize view impacts to the CST when it is built in the future. A conservation/trail easement should be required over this area. Preservation of the natural resources would be the primary goal of the conservation easement, and trails would be a permitted use within this conservation easement. This conservation/trail easement could help offset recreational impacts and biological impacts. An agency such as MRCA would be an appropriate entity to accept such easement.

The Conservancy supports the applicant's offer to dedicate an easement for a trail shown on the City of Malibu Master Trails Plan (March 2004). The City should make this a condition of approval.

City of Malibu

Two residences, 22303 and 2230 PCH

January 23, 2006

Page 3

In summary, the project description in the MND is flawed and unclear. We recommend a new MND be prepared, which includes the site plan and the description of the four homes, and that it be circulated for comment. In any case, a conservation/trail easement should be required over the northern portion of the property, encompassing an area from the northern property boundary 800 feet to the south. Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have any questions, or would like to discuss further, please contact Judi Tamasi of our staff at (310)-589-3200, ext. 121.

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH CHEADLE  
Chairperson